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Here's a warning for would-be disability scofflaws: If you're going to say you're too hurt to work, don't be photographed doing yoga on a paddle board.

It's a lesson one Seattle businessman recently learned courtesy of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Paul D. LaMarche, 67, pleaded guilty to wire fraud and theft of government property in March, acknowledging that he took nearly \$180,000 in disability benefits from BNSF Railway over 23 years. He was sentenced in U.S. District Court on Monday to nine months in prison and ordered to repay the money, along with a civil penalty of the same amount.

The decades-long scam began, according to court documents filed in the case, when LaMarche claimed in 1988 that due to a medical condition he could no longer work as a conductor and brakeman for the railway.

Five years later he began receiving a disability annuity from the Railroad Retirement Board, and each year since then he certified that he was unable to work and had limited earnings.

An investigation by special agents with the Railroad Retirement Board Office of Inspector General and the U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service revealed that LaMarche was running a business piloting tourist charter boats even as he claimed that he could not "lift, pull or carry heavy items" was "unable to run or jump," and had "debilitating headaches daily."

LaMarche opened Emerald City Charters, which runs

two large sailboats out of Elliott Bay, in 1984 and was the chief operator of those vessels while he was allegedly disabled, court documents show.

Federal prosecutors with the U.S. Attorney's Office say that in order to get his captain's license, LaMarche submitted multiple forms to the U.S. Coast Guard claiming he had no impairments that would limit his physical activities or ability to pilot the boats.

To promote his charter-boat business, federal investigators say LaMarche appeared in promotional videos actively sailing the boats and was featured on a television show doing yoga on a standup paddle board.

At his sentencing, U.S. District Judge James L. Robart called LaMarche a thief and said he'd been "... stealing from the government and lying about it."

LaMarche agreed to pay back the \$177,369 he received in disability payments over the years as well as another \$177,369 as a civil penalty for violating the False Claims Act, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Western District of Washington.

LaMarche was ordered to report to prison Tuesday.

PUBLISHED: OCT. 2, 2018, 3:17 P.M.